



## **VULNERABLE ADULT ABUSE TRAINING AVAILABLE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**August 22, 2005**

**EAST LANSING.** Michigan law enforcement officers will be better equipped to handle cases of abuse and sexual assault against older individuals and individuals with disabilities thanks to training offered by the Michigan State Police, Wayne State University Developmental Disabilities Institute, the Office of Services to the Aging and the Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence.

Using a federal grant from the Office of Justice Programs, regional trainings on vulnerable adult abuse will be offered to law enforcement officers, prosecutors and advocates beginning this month. Training sessions titled "Understanding and Investigating Vulnerable Adult Abuse and Neglect: The Role of Law Enforcement" will be held August through November at locations in Lansing, Livonia, Gaylord and Midland.

Vulnerable adult abuse is harming or creating the serious risk of harm for someone who is an older adult or a person with a physical or mental disability. The abuse can take many forms: physical abuse, neglect, emotional or psychological abuse, sexual abuse or financial abuse.

The training session will teach participants the general characteristics of aging and about different kinds of disabilities. They will also learn special interviewing skills in order to obtain accurate information from vulnerable adults and to determine proper measures that should be taken to offer assistance. Participants will also learn how to identify abuse by primary caregivers, how to remove a victim from a home and how to identify community partners and possible referral services.

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“This training will be valuable for law enforcement officers because it is estimated 80,000 Michigan citizens aged 60 and older are victims of vulnerable adult abuse,” stated Colonel Tadarial J. Sturdivant, director of the Michigan State Police. “As the aging population increases, Michigan could be faced with over 100,000 cases of elder abuse by the year 2010.

“Vulnerable adult abuse is a crime that is going under reported and unpunished. This training seeks to fill the gap in recognizing vulnerable adult abuse and holding perpetrators accountable.”

Additionally, this training will help law enforcement officers to understand the unique circumstances surrounding persons with physical, cognitive and emotional disabilities. Nationwide, people with disabilities constitute the single largest minority group, consisting of approximately 54 million people.

To bring further awareness, law enforcement agencies who are unable to attend the training will receive a resource kit with reference information about vulnerable adult abuse and a training video.

If you or someone you know is a victim of vulnerable adult abuse, please contact your local law enforcement agency or the Michigan Department of Human Services, Adult Protective Services. Help is also available from the following organizations:

Vulnerable Adult Helpline	1-800-996-6228
Long Term Care Ombudsman	1-866-485-9393
Legal Hotline for Michigan Seniors	1-800-347-5297
National Domestic Violence Hotline	1-800-799-7233

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**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

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